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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 249555 TOSEC 160121

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ORIGIN ARA-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-05 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /014 R

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APPROVED BY: ARA: WLUERS
ARA/NC: FJDEVINE
ARA/PAN: JBECKER
S/S-O: LMATTESON
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O 210221Z OCT 75 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 249555 TOSEC 160121

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BOGOTA 10073 ACTION SECSTATE INFO PANAMA 20 OCT 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 10073

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN, CO
SUBJECT: VISIT TO CUBA BY PANAMANIAN MILITARY MISSION

FOR ARA ASST SEC ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 248406

1. I SAW PRESIDENT LOPEZ AT NOON TODAY (LOPEZ SPENT WEEKEND ON AN ISLAND OFF OF CARTAGENA AND DID NOT RETURN UNTIL THIS MORNING SO I COULD NOT GET TO HIM EARLIER). I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE BACKGROUND ON THE MILITARY MISSION AND GAVE HIM A SUMMARY OF THE PRENSA LATINA AND RADIO
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COMMENTARY (STATE 247097). LOPEZ HAD NOT HEARD OF THE

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MILITARY MISSION TO CUBA.

2. I SAID THAT REMEMBERING HIS OFFER TO BE OF HELP WITH
THE PANAMANIANS, THE SECRETARY WANTED TO ASK HIS ASSISTANCE
IN CONVEYING TO TORRIJOS THE SECRETARY'S VERY SERIOUS CONCERN
AT WHAT WE BELIEVE WILL BE A MOST UNFORTUNATE PUBLIC AND
CONGRESSIONAL IMPACT. I STRESSED THAT THE VISIT AND PUBLICITY
WERE MOST UNHELPFUL AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, AND THAT
WE HOPED THAT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE THE
DAMAGE.

3. PRESIDENT LOPEZ SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AND ASKED
ME TO TELL THE SECRETARY THAT HE (LOPEZ) WOULD BE
VERY HAPPY TO TAKE THIS MATTER UP WITH TORRIJOS.
HE SAID THAT BY A FORTUNATE COINCIDENCE A PERSONAL
EMISSARY FROM TORRIJOS (AN AMBASSADOR JURADO) WAS
COMING TO SEE HIM TOMORROW. HE WOULD USE THIS OPPORTUNITY
TO CONVEY THE SECRETARY'S CONCERN TO TORRIJOS AS WELL AS TO
TRY TO EXPLAIN AGAIN THE REALITIES OF THE US CONGRESSIONAL
AND PUBLIC SCENE.

4. PRESIDENT LOPEZ SAID THAT OBVIOUSLY TORRIJOS BELIEVES
THAT IN SHOWING HIS TEETH MA PUTS MORE PRESSURE ON THE
US. HE BELIEVES, LOPEZ SAID, THAT SINCE THE STATE
DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN RELATIVELY TOLERANT TOWARD HIS TACTICS
THE US CONGRESS WILL BE EQUALLY TOLERANT. TORRIJOS
THINKS MISTANKENLY, LOPEZ SAID, THAT THE US WOULD BE
AFRAID TO CONFRONT HIM, NOR DOES HE UNDERSTAND THE BACK-
LASH OF SENTIMENT BUILDING UP IN THE US.

5. PRESIDENT LOPEZ REPEATED AGAIN THAT HE WOULD UTILIZE
JURADO'S VISIT TO TAKE UP THIS MATTER AND ASSURED ME
HE WOULD TRY TO BE HELPFUL.

6. PRESIDENT LOPEZ WAS MOST FRIENDLY AND
COOPERATIVE AND, I THINK, UNDERSTANDING. HIS
SEEING ME WITHIN TWO HOURS OF HIS RETURN FROM
CARTAGENA DEMONSTRATES, I BELIEVE, THAT THE VISIT
DID HAVE GOOD PAYOFF IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.
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UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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To: SECRETARY
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